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C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 9069
E.O. 12065: GDS 11/2/85 (FRIEDMAN, TOWNSEND B.) OR-P
TAGS: SHUM AR
SUBJ: (U) HUMAN RIGHTS SUMMARY - OCTOBER 25-NOVEMBER 1
REF: BUENOS AIRES 8862
1. (C) SUMMARY: AN UNCONFIRMED DISAPPEARANCE AND THE POPE'S CONDEMNATION OF DISAPPEARANCES TOPPED THE HUMAN RIGHTS NEWS THIS WEEK. TIMERMAN REMAINED A NEWS ITEM. WE ARE TOLD THAT THE IAHRC PLANS TO PUBLICLY DISTRIBUTE 10,000 COPIES OF ITS REPORT ON ARGENTINA IN LATE JANUARY OR EARLY FEBRUARY. END SUMMARY.
2. (U) A POSSIBLE DISAPPEARANCE: WE HAVE JUST BEEN INFORMED OF A POSSIBLE DISAPPEARANCE, THE FIRST SUCH REPORT IN ALMOST A MONTH. VICTOR RUBENS PORTER WAS TAKEN AWAY BY FIVE HEAVILY ARMED MEN WHO SEIZED HIM IN A BUENOS
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AIRES REAL ESTATE OFFICE WHERE HE HAD GONE TO CONDUCT BUSINESS. ACCORDING TO THE WITNESSES, THE MEN WHO SEIZED RUBENS PORTER STATED THAT THEY HAD BEEN LOOKING FOR HIM FOR SEVERAL MONTHS. PORTER, TWENTY-TWO YEARS OLD, WAS EMPLOYED IN THE PRINT SHOP OF THE BUENOS AIRES HERALD. HIS PARENTS HAVE FILED A HABEAS CORPUS PETITION. ONE HUMAN RIGHTS SOURCE ESPECIALLY CLOSE TO THE CASE IS HOPEFUL THAT THIS MAY NOT BE A DISAPPEARANCE, NOTING THAT SEVERAL RECENT INCIDENTS THAT ORIGINALLY LOOKED LIKE DISAPPEARANCES TURNED OUT TO BE NORMAL ARRESTS.
3. (U) THE POPE SPEAKS OUT ON ARGENTINA: THE POPE ADDRESSED THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN ARGENTINA TWICE ON OCTOBER 20. SPEAKING TO PILGRIMS, THE POPE RE- FERRED TO LATIN AMERICA IN GENERAL AND CHILE AND ARGENTINA IN PARTICULAR ABOUT THE "PROBLEM OF THE
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DISAPPEARED". HE ASKED THAT GOD COMFORT "THOSE WHO DO NOT HAVE THE HOPE TO AGAIN EMBRASE THEIR LOVED ONES". HE WENT ON TO STATE: "WE SHARE FULLY THEIR PAIN AND DO NOT LOSE THE HOPE THAT THEIR VERY PAINFUL PROBLEMS BE CLEARED UP FOR THE GOOD NOT ONLY OF THE CONCERNED FAMILIES BUT ALSO FOR THE INTERNAL PEACE OF THESE COUNTRIES....WE ASK THAT ANNOUNCED CLARIFICATION OF THE SITUATION OF THOSE IN JAIL BE ACCELERATED AND THAT IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES" THE RULE OF LAW BE STRICTLY OBEYED, "EVEN FOR THE GUILTY AND THOSE INVOLVED IN VIOLENCE." SPEAKING TO THE ARGENTINE BISHOPS WHO HAVE ASSEMBLED IN ROME, THE POPE EXHORTED THEM TO DEFEND HUMAN RIGHTS.

THE POPE'S REMARKS WERE CAREFULLY BALANCED AND RESTRAINED. BUT THEY HAVE HAD A MAJOR IMPACT IN THIS VERY CATHOLIC COUNTRY. AS MORE THAN ONE PERSON HAS OBSERVED, FOLLOWING THE PAPAL REMARKS NOBODY CAN DENY THE EXISTENCE

OF EITHER MAJOR HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS OR A SERIOUS PROBLEM OF THE DISAPPEARELS. OVER THE LONGER RUN, MANY OF OUR CONTACTS ARE HOPEFUL THAT THE POPE WILL INSPIRE THE ARGENTINE CHURCH TO TAKE A MORE AGGRESSIVE STANCE IN DEFENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

4. (C) TIMERMAN AWARD: TIMERMAN'S ACTIVITI S IN THE US CONTINUE TO RECEIVE ATTENTION HERE. THE PRESS REPORTED BOTH HIS RECEPTION IN THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE AND HIS RECEIVING THE B'NAI B'RITH'S HUBERT HUMPHREY AWARD. PRESS COVERAGE OF THE LATTER EVENT INCLUDE THE AWARD TO AND REMARKS BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY DERIAN, TIMERMAN'S ALLEGATION THAT HE CANCELLED A SCHEDULED PRESS CONFERENCE BECAUSE OF HIS FEARS THAT "IT COULD CAUSE CONSIDERABLE DANGER TO PERSONS AND INDIVIDUALS" IN ARGENTINA WAS REPORTED HERE.

WE HAVE NO REPORTS RE THREATS TO TIMERMAN AND HIS FAMILY FROM ELEMENTS OF THE GOA. HOWEVER, WE UNDERSTAND HE AND HIS ADVISORS HAVE CONCLUDED THAT IT IS BEST FOR HIM TO KEEP SILENT FOR A WHILE. OUR SOURCES HERE STATE THAT THIS RETICENCE IS BASED PARTLY ON FEARS ABOUT EVENTUAL REPRISALS. BUT TIMERMAN'S DESIRE TO APPEAR CREDIBLE--RATHER THAN SIMPLY RESENTFUL--ALSO PLAYS A ROLE, AS DOES A JUDGMENT THAT BY SPEAKING OUT NOW HE COULD HAVE A NEGATIVE EFFECT ON THE STILL DELICATE SITUATION WITHIN THE ARGENTINE MILITARY. WE ARE TOLD THOUGH THAT WHEN HE DOES SPEAK OUT HIS REVELATIONS WILL BE "EXPLOSIVE" AND IN FACT HAS ALREADY WRITTEN SEVERAL ARTICLES LADEN WITH "REVELATIONS".

5. (C) IAHRC REPORT: HUMAN RIGHTS SOURCES HERE UNDERSTAND THAT THE IAHRC REPORT ON ARGENTINA WILL BE COMPLETED BY LATE JANUARY. ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCES THE COMMISSION

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WILL PRINT AND DISTRIBUTE 10,000 COPIES OF THE REPORT
AT THAT TIME. OUR SOURCES EXPECT THAT THE REPORT
IS GOING TO BE VER TOUGH ON ARGENTINA.
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6. (U) A WITNESS EXPELLED: LAST WEEK WE
REPORTED THAT A PARAGUAYAN JOHOVAH'S WITNESS UNDER AN
EXPULSION ORDER OF ARGENTINE IMMIGRATION AUTHORITIES WAS
TOLD BY A COURT HE SHOULD EXHAUST HIS APPEALS TO THE
INTERIOR MINISTRY BEFORE SEEKING RECOURSE TO THE COURTS.
WHATEVER HOPE THE INDIVIDUAL INVOLVED MAY HAVE HAVE FOR
EVENTUAL LEGAL REDRESS MUST HAVE BEEN DIMINISHED THIS
WEEK WHEN A FEDERAL COURT REJECTED AN APPEAL BY AN
URUGUAYAN WITNESS UNDER A SIMILAR EXPULSION ORDER.
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